

The Present Application

By way of brief review, the present application is directed to a system, apparatus and method for the automatic setup and teardown of conferencing services in a multiple leg telecommunications session. Where the invention is available, the telecommunications subscriber may predefine a list of secondary directory numbers in association with a primary or pilot directory number. The subscriber may also predefine which of the secondary directory numbers are to be associated with a conferencing session such as a conference call and whether or not the primary or pilot directory number is to be associated with a conferencing mode. When the subscriber dials the primary or pilot directory number, the system accesses the database to determine, among other things, the state of a conference mode parameter. If the conference mode parameter indicates that the primary directory number is currently configured for conference mode, call legs are set up in association with each secondary directory number associated with a secondary directory number conference parameter set to conference mode. The system monitors call progress on each of the call legs. Unanswered call legs can be dropped based on a predetermined no-answer parameter or time limit. In some embodiments, the call legs are set up differentially. That is, the call legs are processed based on the delay parameters associated with the secondary directory numbers. The set up of call legs that can be completed quickly is delayed so that processing of call legs that take longer to set up can begin early so that alerting of all call leg stations can begin approximately the same time. In some embodiments, the conference call is terminated when the subscriber disconnects from the conference call. In other embodiments, the conference call ends when the penultimate, or second to last, station to disconnect disconnects.

The Cited References

In contrast, the primary reference of the Office Action to Bernstein discloses an automatic three-way calling feature for a telecommunications system wherein a calling party dials an 800 number to access an adjunct 300 to a telecommunications network. The adjunct must request the identity (ANI) of the calling station. If the calling station is a subscriber to conference calling services, the adjunct provides the calling station with a second dial tone. A subscriber at the calling station may then enter one or more speed dialing codes or similar indications which indicate to the adjunct stations with which the calling subscriber wishes to establish a conference connection. It is respectfully submitted that, in the system of Bernstein, secondary numbers are not

associated with a pilot or primary directory number. It is further submitted that all subscribers to the service of Bernstein call the same 800 number to access the adjunct **300**. The adjunct then determines a caller's automatic identification number (ANI) and from that determines whether or not the caller is a subscriber (column 3, line 66 – column 4, line 8). If the caller is a subscriber, the adjunct **300** provides the subscriber with a new dial tone indicating to the subscriber that commands and speed dial numbers may be entered to indicate, for example, which other stations should be included in a conference call (column 4, lines 8-26). In this regard, translations for the speed dial codes are associated with an ANI of the calling party and not a pilot or primary directory number dialed by the calling party.

Eisdorfer is unconcerned with conference calling. Instead, Eisdorfer is concerned with a method and system for selectively alerting multiple telephones of an incoming call. Eisdorfer claims to disclose a method and system for selectively routing incoming calls to a requested called party wherein the requested called party is at least one of a group of individuals associated with the multiple of telephones. In the system of Eisdorfer, a database system sends a menu to a calling party so that the calling party may choose an option which corresponds to at least one individual associated with the plurality of telephones. Based on the option chosen by the calling party, one or more destination directory numbers are alerted. However, once one of the alerted stations is answered, the other calls are dropped (column 8, lines 5-10). Therefore, Eisdorfer is unconcerned with conference calling and is non-analogous art with regard to the present application.

The Claims are Unobvious

Claims 1-57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bernstein in view of Eisdorfer.

In rejecting **claim 1**, the Office Action asserts that Bernstein teaches a method for telecommunication conferencing in a multiple leg telecommunications session comprising determining a plurality of secondary directory numbers associated with a primary directory number. The Applicants respectfully disagree. In support of this assertion, the Office Action directs the attention of the Applicants to column 1, lines 47-48, of Bernstein. However, the reference section explains that, responsive to receipt of a telephone call from a subscriber and a sequence of speed dial codes via the associated call connection, the system of Bernstein identifies telephone numbers respectively associated with the speed dial codes, places a telephone call to each of the telephone numbers and conferences each call with the subscribers call. The referenced section does not teach determining a plurality of secondary directory numbers associated with a primary directory number.

For the foregoing reasons, Bernstein does not include the subject matter for which it is relied upon and **claim 1**, as well as **claims 2-17** which depend therefrom, is unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

Additionally, as explained above, Eisdorfer is unconcerned with conferencing services and is non-analogous art. One concerned with the art of conference calling would not look to Eisdorfer. Therefore, Eisdorfer is not fairly combined with Bernstein against the claims of the present application.

For these additional reasons, **claim 1**, as well as **claims 2-17** which depend therefrom, is unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claims 2, 19 and 36**, the Office Action asserts that Bernstein discloses determining whether the primary number and its associated plurality of directory numbers are configured for a conference mode. In support of this assertion, the Office Action directs the attention of the Applicants to column 3, line 67 – column 4, line 15. However, this portion of Bernstein explains that the system of Bernstein determines based on a calling party's ANI if the caller is a subscriber of the service. If the caller is a subscriber of the service, an associated database is accessed using the callers ANI (and not a pilot or primary directory number) so that telephone numbers associated with speed dial codes entered by the calling subscriber may be referenced.

As explained above, it is respectfully submitted that Bernstein does not disclose or suggest secondary directory numbers are associated with a primary directory number. Additionally, it is submitted that Bernstein does not disclose or suggest that secondary directory numbers are pre-configured for a conference mode. Instead, Bernstein discloses that telephone numbers are associated with speed dial numbers and that speed dial numbers may be entered at the time the conference call is to be established to include stations associated with the speed dial codes in a conference call. It is respectfully submitted that an ANI of a calling party is not a called primary directory number as disclosed and claimed in the present application.

For the foregoing reasons, **claims 2, 19 and 36** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claims 3, 20 and 37**, the Office Action admits that neither Bernstein nor Eisdorfer disclose or suggest continuing to alert an unanswered outgoing call leg of a plurality of outgoing call legs until a predetermined period of time elapsed. However, the Office Action asserts that it is obvious that alerting an unanswered outgoing call leg will stop after a predetermined period of time has expired. The Applicants respectfully disagree. In fact, it is respectfully submitted that Bernstein teaches away from stopping an alert after a predetermined period of time is expired. Instead, Bernstein discloses that a station is alerted until the calling subscriber terminates the call (FIG. 6, column 6, line

63 – column 7, line 6). The 50 milliseconds referred to in Bernstein as a time for rechecking to see if the calling subscriber terminated the call and not a time period for automatically terminating a call leg. Clearly, 50 milliseconds is not even long enough to alert a station with one ring.

For the foregoing reasons, **claims 3, 20 and 37** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claims 4, 6, 21, 23, 38 and 40**, the Office Action asserts that Bernstein discloses when the predetermined period of time has elapsed, releasing any outgoing call leg, of the plurality of outgoing call legs, which has remained unanswered. In support of this assertion, the Office Action directs the attention of the Applicants to column 7, lines 2-5, and FIG. 6, reference numerals **404-16, 404-18**. However, as explained above in reference to **claims 3, 20 and 37**, this portion of Bernstein discloses that alerting continues until a message indicating that the calling subscriber terminated the call is received. Bernstein does not disclose or suggest releasing an outgoing call leg when a predetermined period of time has elapsed. Indeed, Bernstein teaches away from that.

For the foregoing reasons, **claims 4, 6, 21, 23, 38 and 40** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claims 5, 22 and 39**, the Office Action refers to the reasons applied to **claim 1**. However, **claims 5, 22 and 39** recite a second predetermined period of time and processing and routing a second outgoing call leg to a corresponding secondary directory number associated with previously unanswered outgoing call leg. It is respectfully submitted that the reasons given for rejecting **claim 1** do not refer to a second predetermined time period or processing and routing second outgoing call leg to a corresponding secondary directory number associated with the previously unanswered outgoing call leg. Furthermore, neither Bernstein nor Eisdorfer disclose or suggest a second predetermined period of time nor processing and routing a second outgoing call leg to a corresponding secondary directory number associated with the previously unanswered call leg. Review and reconsideration and/or clarification are respectfully requested with regard to the rejection of **claims 5, 22 and 39**.

It is respectfully submitted that **claims 5, 22 and 39** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claims 7, 24 and 41**, the Office Action again asserts that Bernstein discloses a predetermined period of time is determined for a no-answer time parameter and again refers to column 7, lines 2-4. Arguments similar to those submitted in support of **claims 4, 5, 6, 21, 22, 23, 38-40** are submitted in support of **claims 7, 24 and 41**.

For the foregoing reasons, **claims 7, 24 and 41** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claim 18**, the Office Action asserts that Bernstein discloses a system for telecommunication conferencing in a multiple leg telecommunications session, the system comprising a database having stored in a memory a plurality of secondary numbers associated with the primary directory number. In support of that assertion, the Office Action directs the attention of the Applicants to FIG. 1, reference numeral **225**, and column 2, line 63 – column 3, line 3. However, reference numeral **225** references an ordinary network control point. Column 2, line 63 – column 3, line 3, describe how an 800 number is translated into a telephone number associated with an adjunct **300** and how call routing proceeds based on that translation. Bernstein discloses secondary directory numbers associated with an automatic identification number (ANI) and speed dial codes. An ANI is not a primary directory number as disclosed and claimed in the present application.

For the foregoing reasons, as well as reasons similar to those submitted in support of **claim 1**, **claim 18**, as well as **claims 19-34** which depend therefrom, is unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

Additionally, **claim 34** recites a mobile switching center. The Office Action admits that Bernstein does not disclose a mobile switching center and relies on Eisdorfer for such disclosure. However, as explained above, Eisdorfer is not concerned with conferencing services. Therefore, Eisdorfer is non-analogous art and is not fairly cited against the claims of the present application.

For the foregoing additional reasons, **claim 34** is unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claim 35**, the Office Action asserts that Bernstein discloses an apparatus for telecommunication conferencing in a multiple leg telecommunications session, the apparatus comprising a network interface for reception of an incoming call leg designating a primary directory number, and a memory storing a plurality of secondary directory numbers associated with the primary directory number. As explained above, Bernstein does not disclose a primary directory number or secondary directory numbers associated with a primary directory number.

For the foregoing reasons, **claim 35** as well as **claims 36-49** which depend therefrom, is unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claims 8-10, 25-27 and 42-44**, the Office Action referred to the same reasons as those cited in reference to **claim 1**, element e). **Claims 8-10, 25-27 and 42-44** depend from **claims 1, 18 and 35**, respectively, and are unanticipated and unobvious for that reason.

Additionally, **claims 9, 26 and 43** are related to concurrently connecting all answered outgoing call legs to the incoming call leg. It is respectfully submitted that

Bernstein is silent with regard to concurrently connecting all answered outgoing call legs.

For this additional reason, **claims 9, 26 and 43** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

Claims 10, 27 and 44 are related to connecting the answered outgoing call leg and the incoming call leg to a conference bridge. It is respectfully submitted that Bernstein is silent with regard to a conferencing bridge. For this additional reason, **claims 10, 27 and 44** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claims 12, 28 and 45**, the Office Action asserts that Bernstein discloses the plurality of secondary directory numbers corresponding to the primary directory number and the conference mode designation are predefined and stored in the database. In support of this assertion, the Office Action directs the attention of the Applicants to FIG. 1, reference numeral **225**. However, reference numeral **225** is simply a reference to a network control point. As explained above, Bernstein does not disclose or suggest plurality of secondary numbers corresponding to a primary directory number. Instead, Bernstein discloses secondary directory numbers associated with an ANI and speed dial numbers. Furthermore, **claims 12, 28 and 45** are related to secondary directory numbers corresponding to a primary directory number and a conference mode designation being predefined and stored in a database. Bernstein does not disclose or suggest a conference mode designation being stored in a database. Instead, Bernstein discloses a subscriber designating via speed dial codes that a number be included in a conference call each time the subscriber wishes to include the number in a conference call.

For the foregoing reasons, **claims 12, 28 and 45** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

Claim 13, 29 and 46 depend from **claim 12** and are unanticipated and unobvious for that reason. Additionally, **claims 13, 29, and 46** recite an interface coupled to a database for subscriber determination of the plurality of secondary numbers in a corresponding conference mode. As explained above, Bernstein does not disclose associating a corresponding conference mode with a secondary directory number.

For the foregoing additional reasons, **claims 13, 29 and 46** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claim 14**, the Office Action asserts that Bernstein discloses determining a plurality of directory numbers is performed by a database query designating the primary directory number. In support of this assertion, the Office Action refers to column 1, lines 36-39. However, the referenced section describes a caller establishing an n-way conference call by entering a sequence of speed dial codes respectively associated with the telephone numbers of the conferees that will be

involved in the conference call. The referenced section is unrelated to a database query designating primary directory number. Furthermore, column 4, lines 1-15, of Bernstein, make it clear that an automatic identification number (ANI) is designated in a database query. It is respectfully submitted that an ANI of a calling party is not a primary directory number as disclosed and claimed in the present application. For the foregoing additional reasons, **claim 14** is unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claims 16, 31 and 48**, the Office Action asserts that Bernstein discloses terminating the multiple leg telecommunications conference session upon a termination of penultimate call leg remaining from a plurality of call legs from the multiple leg telecommunications conference session. In support of this assertion, the Office Action directs the attention of the Applications to column 7, lines 12-19. However, the referenced section describes responding to the subscriber terminating the call connection by hanging up. Then the program terminates all of the connections associated with the conference connection by sending appropriate instructions to an associated toll switch via a signaling channel. The referenced section does not disclose or suggest terminating a multiple leg telecommunications conference session upon a penultimate call leg being terminated.

For the foregoing additional reasons, **claims 16, 31 and 48** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claims 17, 32 and 49**, the Office Action admits that Bernstein does not disclose concurrent alerting and asserts that Eisdorfer discloses differential processing and routing each outgoing call leg to provide concurrent alerting of a corresponding plurality of outgoing call legs. In support of this assertion, the Office Action directs the attention of the Applicants to column 3, lines 10-19, of Eisdorfer. However, as explained in the present application on page 14, lines 3-7, in differential processing and routing, processing and routing may be delayed according to each secondary directory numbers respective timing delay parameter to provide concurrent alerting (approximately) for all of the secondary directory numbers. As explained above, this compensates for different setup times associated with different secondary directory numbers. The referenced section of Eisdorfer is unassociated and unconcerned with differential processing.

For the foregoing additional reasons, **claims 17, 32 and 49** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claim 50**, the Office Action applied arguments similar to those submitted against **claim 1, claim 18 and claim 34**. Additionally, the Office Action asserts that a conference bridge coupled to a mobile switching center is simply well-known in the art. The Applicants respectfully traverse the assertion with regard to a conference bridge and request that some evidence supporting the assertion be provided.

Additionally, arguments similar to those submitted in support of **claim 1, 18 and 34** are submitted in support of **claim 50**.

For the foregoing reasons, **claim 50**, as well as **claims 51-57** which depend therefrom, is unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

Claims 51-56 were rejected for the same reasons as **claims 3, 4, 5, 13, 15-17**. Arguments similar to those submitted in support of **claims 3-5, 13, 15-17** are submitted in support of **claims 51-56**. Furthermore, the Applicants traverse the assertion made by the Office Action that the claims recite the same instructions as in regular switching environments.

For the foregoing reasons, **claims 51-56** are unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

In rejecting **claim 57**, the Office Action asserts that using ANSI-41 is obvious. However, **claim 57** recites transmitting an ANSI CompatibleLocationRequest RETURN RESULT containing a listing of each secondary directory number, a conference parameter, and answering and terminating parameters for each secondary directory number. It is respectfully submitted that the conferencing, answering and terminating parameters disclosed in the present application and recited in **claim 57** are extensions to the ANSI-41 standard and not disclosed or made obvious by it.

For the foregoing reasons, **claim 57** is unanticipated and unobvious in light of Bernstein and Eisdorfer taken alone or in any combination.

Telephone Interview

In the interests of advancing this application to issue the Applicant(s) respectfully request that the Examiner telephone the undersigned to discuss the foregoing or any suggestions that the Examiner may have to place the case in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1-57 remain in the application. For the reasons set forth above, it is submitted that application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, an early indication thereof is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph D. Dreher", is written over a horizontal line.

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